CC #18

Circular Letter No. 55.

December 2, 1910

To Supervising Principals.

Gentlemen:--

The following suggestions in reference to the paper form of plan books are considered advisable in view of the wide discrepancy observed in this important part of the school work.

The plan book is just what its name implies: the book of plans for eache recitation each day. It should state:

FIRST: The date. Many times this is omitted and an examination shows that for many days there has been no plan prepared. The excuse is usually the lame one: "I repeated the work of the day before." Again teachers use the plan book of the previous year or previous term, changing the date. It is clear that a plan suitable for one group of children in not the best for another group, and such a repetition is no indication of careful daily preparation on the part of the teacher.

SECOND: The grade and group of each class taught.

THIRD: The following three headings for each subject.

(a) Aim. This should be definite, clear and limited

to what can be taught in that class period. "To teach the new words on page 20 of the Cartilla" would be a good aim; "To teach the children how to read page ____ correctly" is too indefinite. "To teach about the royal palm" is an illustration of the lack of clearness. Often more is indicated in the aim than can possibly be covered in the class period. "To teach the fractions 1/2, 1/3, 1/4" is a sample of this fault. Then, again, the aim does not agree with the presentation which follows.

(c) Presentations of the Lesson. This should include the development of the lesson from the facts known to the child to the unknown facts to be taught, the general trend of the questions, and illustrations.

(c) Application of the lesson to practical use. This should include the seat work that is to follow; the conclusions to be drawn; the application to the life of the child.

As a general rule the plan books of teachers in the lower grades are better kept than of those in the upper grades as the scope of the work is broader and hence tends to be more indefinite. The topics to be covered--and recitations in the upper grades should be largely by topics--should be indicated.

In many schools it is out of the question to expect the teacher of English to correct the English in the plan books of the different teachers, because of the pressure

of work in teaching several grades, and yet supervision of this sort is desirable. In one district the plan is followed, with good results, of requiring a teacher, when in need of a new plan book, to bring the old one to the Supervising Principal, who then has an opportunity to examine the book at his leisure. This gives him a much better idea of the work of the teacher than the hasty examination made at the time of the visit. The book is corrected and returned. All the plan books of a year should be accessible for inspection at all times.

Of course, we all know that there are teachers who do excellent work in spite of poorly prepared plan books; but, as a general rule, the plan book is a fair index of the quality of work done by the teacher, and the plan books of a district indicate fairly well the character of the work of that district.

Yours very truly,

Acting Commissioner.